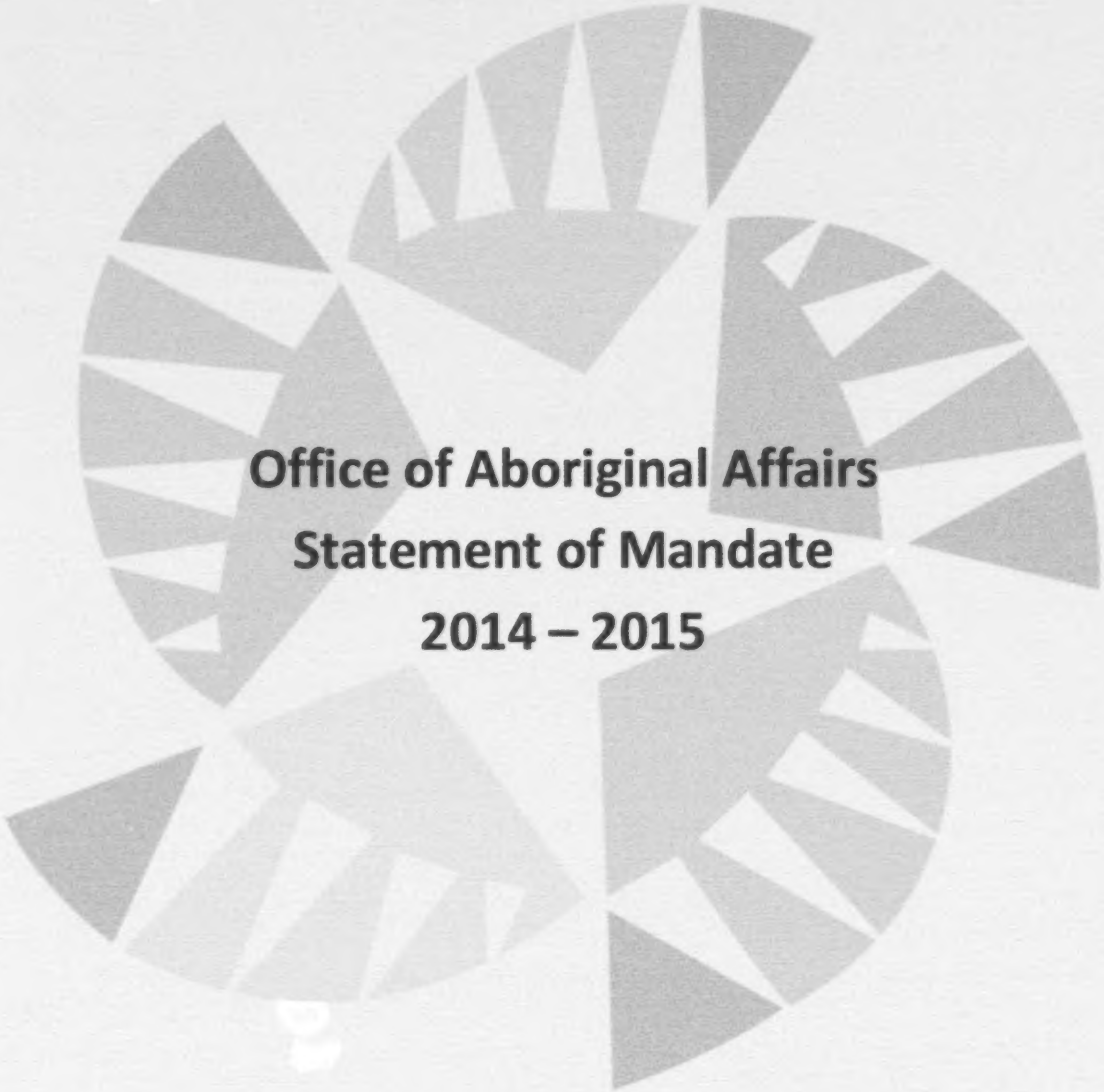

Office of Aboriginal Affairs
Statement of Mandate
2014 – 2015

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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate for the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Nova Scotia government is committed to improving the quality of life and opportunities for Aboriginal people and their communities though a positive and productive relationship based upon mutual understanding and trust between First Nations and the provincial government.

To this end, the Province has recently established a separate office and appointed a CEO to provide dedicated focus to important Aboriginal matters, which will enhance relationships with First Nations and across government. OAA is proud to lead the Province's efforts to address Aboriginal and treaty rights, and advance Mi'kmaq interests and priorities with our Mi'kmaq and federal colleagues, through well-defined frameworks that provide ongoing consultation, negotiations and collaboration. These include the Mi'kmaq-NS-Canada Consultation Terms of Reference, the Made-in- Nova Scotia Negotiations Process, and the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum.

As a further example of our desire for positive and meaningful change for the Mi'kmaq, our government continues to provide significant funding to the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs through their Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiations Office to help them further develop capacity for more effective and meaningful consultations with the province, and support negotiations related community consultation.

The province is working towards the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. With that in mind, we continue to advance strategic efforts and partnerships to increase Aboriginal participation in the provincial economy through improved employment and educational outcomes, including skills development, better health care, and increased business opportunities.

This coming year will be one of celebration and national prominence for Aboriginal people, culture and governance, with three significant national events being hosted in the province - Aboriginal Day Live, the national meeting of the Assembly of First Nations and the National Aboriginal Women's Summit. We look forward to welcoming national delegations of Aboriginal leaders, as well as showcasing Nova Scotia's proud Mi'kmaq culture and heritage to national audiences.

Our journey toward fair and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal peoples helps us to build an inclusive, innovative and prosperous Nova Scotia. It continues to be my pleasure to be the minister responsible for this important portfolio.

Wela'lin

Hon. Stephen McNeil
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

I am delighted to join the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, and look forward to collaborating with Aboriginal partners and government colleagues to address important issues and seek creative opportunities to continue to improve our relationships with the Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal Nova Scotians.

The upcoming year will be an exciting and vibrant one for Aboriginal conversation and celebration across Nova Scotia, with three significant national events being hosted in Nova Scotia: APTN's Halifax-Winnipeg simulcast of National Aboriginal Day Live celebrations will take place on the Halifax waterfront; the Assembly of First Nations will host their national assembly in Halifax this summer; and in the fall, the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit to be held on the Membertou First Nation. We are proud to work with Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal colleagues to coordinate these events, collaborate on important issues, and increase public awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal people and their contributions to our province.

In 2014-2015, OAA will continue to work with provincial partners to bring a more corporate approach within government to Aboriginal affairs. To this end, we have reestablished the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, supported by a Senior Officials Advisory Committee with representatives from every provincial department. In particular, OAA will ensure the interests of Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq are advanced through well-coordinated, and legally-supported, consultations and negotiations.

We will continue to lead the province's engagement with Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq communities and Aboriginal organizations through the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum, the Made-in-Nova Scotia Negotiations Process, and the Terms of Reference for Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation. An important tool in advancing this work will be the new provincial Consultation Policy, which will be completed this year.

A significant piece of work ahead of us for 2014-2015 will be the engagement and planning in preparation for the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit to be held this October in Membertou First Nation. It will be an honour to host this event and be part of the fundamental shift required to improve the lives of Aboriginal women and girls.

Our office continues to support expression of Mi'kmaq history, identity and culture through Treaty Day activities and enhancing Mi'kmaq History Month activities. The significant national attention that will be gained through major events and celebrations will continue to promote and showcase vibrant Aboriginal culture in Nova Scotia, and enhance public appreciation.

Across Nova Scotia and Canada, the Aboriginal landscape is dynamic, exciting and evolving. I look forward to a year of meaningful progress as we work together to improve economic and social outcomes for Mi'kmaq communities and for all of Nova Scotia.

JulieTowers,
CEO of Aboriginal Affairs

Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) Mandate/Mission/Vision

Mandate

To promote a coordinated approach within government on matters related to Aboriginal people, represent the interests of the Province in intergovernmental, multilateral initiatives and negotiations, support consultation with the Mi'kmaq and provide research, analysis and policy advice to government on Aboriginal issues.

Mission

To lead Nova Scotia in Aboriginal Affairs by building mutual understanding, respect and a lasting relationship.

Vision

Partnership-Negotiation-Direction

On our journey toward fair and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal peoples, we strive to build an inclusive, informed and prosperous Nova Scotia.

Strategic Objectives/Outcomes

In order to fulfill this mandate, it is important to understand the positions of the Mi'kmaq, and the complex, unsettled Treaty relationship that the Crown has with the Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. The Umbrella Agreement (2002) outlines the Province's primary commitments and mechanisms by which we currently address issues with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and Canada, namely the development and signing of a Framework Agreement (Aboriginal and Treaty Rights); completion of a Terms of Reference with respect to consultation; and a re-commitment to the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum, a partnership formed in 1997 between the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, the Province of Nova Scotia, and the Government of Canada, to strengthen relationships and to resolve issues of mutual concern affecting Mi'kmaw communities.

The five strategic objectives/outcomes and priorities of OAA are listed below:

1. Collaborative and respectful Aboriginal and intergovernmental relations

To improve relations between the Government of Nova Scotia and Aboriginal communities and organizations. This is accomplished through the ongoing identification and coordination of cross departmental Aboriginal issues; managing bilateral relationships with the Mi'kmaq; and fostering intergovernmental relationships with Canada and other provinces, working with departments and agencies to apply national strategies to provincial approaches.

2. Effective coordination and strategic policy advice to Nova Scotia government

To provide effective coordination and strategic advice to departments and agencies, on an ongoing basis and as required for departmental policies and initiatives, issues and opportunities. This will be accomplished by continuing to work directly with stakeholders and through a variety of bilateral and interdepartmental committees and structures across the provincial government.

3. Positive and productive relationship through negotiations with Canada and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq

To enhance legal clarity on Aboriginal and treaty rights, including title, reduce economic disparity for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and continue to foster a positive and productive relationship through tri-partite negotiations with Canada and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. The Made-in-Nova Scotia Process is a positive alternative to litigation in resolving rights related issues and a means to provide operational clarity as long term negotiations continue toward a final accord on land, resources and governance related matters.

4. Coordinated approach to ensure government meets its legal consultation obligations

To enhance coordination and provide strategic advice to departments to ensure government meets its legal obligations with respect to consulting with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia on issues that may have an adverse impact on their Aboriginal or treaty rights. A new Consultation Policy currently under development will provide greater clarity and increased predictability for the Mi'kmaq, governments, and proponents.

5. Enhanced public awareness and appreciation of Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal history and culture

To increase awareness and understanding of government employees and Nova Scotians on the history and culture of First Nations people in Nova Scotia and the modern-day issues facing the Mi'kmaq. This coming year will be one of celebration and increased prominence for Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia, with APTN Aboriginal Day Live celebrations, the Assembly of First Nations' Annual General Assembly and the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit.

Government Priorities

The Government has set a clear path with six key priorities that relate to the work plan for OAA. This section outlines how OAA will support these priorities in the coming year.

A. Consumer-focused energy solutions including a regulated, competitive energy market

The Mi'kmaq have important roles to play in the economic future of the Province. OAA and other provincial departments will continue to work with the Mi'kmaq and federal government to provide opportunities for their workforce development and participation in this growing sector.

The Province, through its support of a Mi'kmaq Major Resource and Energy Fund and the development of a Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy, has helped create a foundation for future economic opportunity for the Mi'kmaq in the renewable energy sector. The COMFIT program is supporting Mi'kmaq renewable energy projects, which both increase potential revenue generation for the Mi'kmaq and also provide alternative energy sources for Nova Scotians. OAA intends to build on these efforts by supporting agencies and initiatives that will increase Mi'kmaq participation in the renewable energy sector, including addressing identified gaps of access to capital, training and capacity.

B. Prosperous businesses of all sizes - creating jobs across the province

It is understood that Mi'kmaw communities have the youngest and fastest growing population in the province with half the Mi'kmaw population under age 25. For this reason OAA is supporting several actions that help more Mi'kmaq youth reach their potential, find meaningful employment and contribute to the business activity of the province.

For example, OAA is working closely with the departments of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and Economic and Rural Development and Tourism (ERDT) to support and maximize training and skills development opportunities for Mi'kmaq youth. OAA, LAE and ERDT have formed an Aboriginal skills and employment team to advance economic development and workforce projects with the Aboriginal community. OAA is working with Federal and Mi'kmaq partners to capitalize on opportunities emerging from the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy.

OAA will continue to work closely with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage (CCH) to support community development in individual Mi'kmaw communities through First Nation gaming agreements. These agreements provide approximately $45 million annually to Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. Proceeds from the gaming agreements are used to support social and economic initiatives and community infrastructure.

The Consultation Terms of Reference signed in August of 2010 provides a framework for a streamlined consultation process that formally integrates Mi'kmaw interests and concerns in government decision-making. OAA's consultation unit will continue to link First Nations with business interests in Nova Scotia, and encourage proponents to enter into Benefit Agreements with the Mi'kmaq where appropriate.

C. Investing in student success with a renewed and strengthened education system

The Province of Nova Scotia is committed to the education and success of its Aboriginal students, and sees the potential in this young and growing population to make important contributions to life in the province. In this regard, the ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, Labour & Advanced Education, and Education & Early Childhood Development have renewed their commitment to the Council on Mi'kmaq Education. Improvements in Aboriginal education outcomes are a priority area that both the national Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) and the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum Education Working Committee are working to address. The province also invests in student success and attachment to the workforce. One such example is recently established scholarships for Mi'kmaq students interested in working with Nova Scotia Corrections Services that supports training and on-the-job placements with Corrections Services. The province is supportive of career development and exploration for Aboriginal youth, and is engaged in collaborative initiatives that will lead to greater workforce attachment such as mentorship programs, internships and unique training-to-employment partnerships with businesses and industry.

D. Accessible, responsive healthcare

OAA will continue to work with our Mi'kmaq partners, other provincial departments and the federal government to improve health outcomes for Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia through the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum Health Working Committee. The current health priorities are Mental Health and Addictions, Continuing Care, Cultural Safety and Training, Relationships and Collaboration, and Youth. These priority areas are being addressed through initiatives pertaining to Mi'kmaq physical activity and recreation and the integration of cultural safety training and Mi'kmaq language interpretation into the provincial mental health crisis line.

Specific examples include the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative; partnership with Doctors Nova to strengthen healthy eating and lifestyle choices; continued participation and support of Aboriginal Track and Field Championships; and development and support of a Mi'kmaq Lacrosse program in Nova Scotia.

E. Helping all Nova Scotians meet their fullest potential by supporting vulnerable communities – seniors, disabled.

OAA works through a variety of forums and with a number of organizations to improve socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities across the province. For example, the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum's Economic Development, Education and Social committees work across governments (Federal and Provincial) and with the Mi'kmaq on initiatives to break the poverty cycle and close the gap in the quality of life between Mi'kmaw communities and the rest of Nova Scotia.

The Province will continue to support organizations and initiatives that work to make life more affordable for Aboriginal people living both on and off reserve across the province. Many Aboriginal seniors, women, youth and families require support to meet their full potential, including programs that meet fundamental needs for housing, training and employment supports. OAA provides support for capacity development and collaborative, community-focused initiatives and organizations that help to address these needs.

Nova Scotia will host the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit in the fall of 2014. This event will provide a forum for sharing best practices and knowledge to raise awareness on the diverse range of issues affecting Aboriginal women, their families and communities, in order to develop culturally-relevant and accessible responses and increase collaboration amongst governments and Aboriginal organizations.

Budget Context

Office of Aboriginal Affairs			
	2013 – 2014 Estimate	2013 – 2014 Forecast	2014 – 2015 Estimate
Program & Service Area	1,959,000	1,975,000	2,197,000
Administration (head office)	1,384,000	1,342,000	1,465,000
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	3,343,000	3,317,000	3,662,000
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	0	(1)	(1)
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	15.3	15.3	15.3

1. Collaborative and respectful Aboriginal and intergovernmental relations					
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year**	**Annual Target 2014-2015**	**Trends, Previous Year Data**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Improved relations between the Government of Nova Scotia and Aboriginal communities and organizations.	Increase in the percentage of departments and agencies that are satisfied with their working relationship with Aboriginal communities and organizations, and/or Specific feedback and exceptional items noted, including social media comments.	2005/06 - 80% were satisfied/ somewhat satisfied	To increase the % of respondents who are satisfied/somewhat satisfied to 95%. Specific feedback and exceptional items noted.	No survey in 2012/13 Annual meeting with Cabinet and Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs resulted in commitments for economic development collaborations. Provided leadership in supporting departments and agencies participating in seven Tripartite Forum working committees. 2010/11 – 91% were satisfied/ somewhat satisfied 2005/06 - 80% were satisfied/ somewhat satisfied	Work with departments and Aboriginal communities and organizations to address a range of issues affecting their communities. Ongoing identification and coordination of cross- departmental Aboriginal issues. Continuation of strategic advice and policy analysis to departments and agencies. Working with departments and agencies to apply national strategies to provincial approaches. Continue providing funding to support consultations, and for Chiefs to increase communication with communities and prepare for future agreements for treaty and aboriginal rights and title. Coordination of the 5th annual Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and Provincial Cabinet meeting.
The interests of Nova Scotians are effectively represented in inter-governmental, tripartite, and bilateral initiatives and negotiations.	Increase in the percentage of government departments and agencies who agree that OAA effectively represents the interests of Nova Scotians,	2005 – 96% strongly agree/agree	To maintain the % of respondents who strongly agree/agree at 96%. Specific feedback and exceptional items noted.	No survey in 2012/13 Hosted national meeting of premiers and National Aboriginal Leaders to review work in 3 priority areas. Through numerous intergovernmental forums OAA supported	Ongoing participation and coordination of provincial role in the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum and the Made-in-Nova Scotia Negotiation Process. Foster intergovernmental involvement and collaboration in national (e.g., Aboriginal Affairs Working Group) and regional initiatives. Collaborate on social and economic priorities through the Mi'kmaq–Nova Scotia–Canada Tripartite Forum. OAA actively participates in seven working committees (Culture & Heritage, Education, Economic

	and/or Specific feedback and exceptional items noted.			for example: • heritage preservation initiatives, • economic development opportunities, • Early Childhood Education programs, • access to mental health and addictions services, • the Eskasoni Crisis Line, recreation opportunities and initiatives to address family violence. 2010/11 - 92% strongly agree/agree 2005/06 – 96% strongly agree/agree	Development, Health, Justice, Social, Sport & Recreation) as well as Steering, Officials and Executive committees. Engage Federal, provincial and territorial governments on a regular basis to share information and discuss issues of common concern, for example: • AAWG meeting in April 2014 • Assembly Chiefs & Cabinet Meeting in May 2014 • CoF / NAO meeting spring 2014 Engage in important national-scope discussions with Aboriginal organizations, leaders and other governments, including: • Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly to be hosted in Halifax in July 2014 • National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS IV) to be hosted in Membertou in October 2014

2. Effective coordination and strategic policy advice to Nova Scotia government

Outcome	Measure	Base Year	Annual Target 2014-2015	Trends, Previous Year Data	Strategies to Achieve Target
Effective coordination and strategic advice provided to departments and agencies.	Departments and agencies satisfaction with advice and support provided by OAA, and/or Specific feedback and exceptional items noted.	Quantitative and qualitative results from a short focus group and one-on-one interviews with provincial partners in OAA-related initiatives. Base year TBD	Improve on the satisfaction level of focus group as compared to baseline data. TBD Specific feedback and exceptional items noted	In 2012/13 OAA provided a wide range of policy and strategic advice. For example: • Advice on the Coastal Strategy; • Together We Can, mental health strategy; • Jobs Here and Workforce Strategy; and • Thrive, Obesity and Physical Activity plan Provided departmental advice and support on key initiatives and funding programs, including advice on Mi'kmaq engagement (Mi'kmaw Cultural Activities Program, Regional Enterprise Networks)	Provide research, policy advice and communications that are timely, accurate, strategic and of value to departments. Coordinate and bring together departments around Aboriginal issues, developments and opportunities of mutual interest and in conjunction with provincial priorities and strategies (e.g., Cultural Strategy). Coordinate interests and activities through department senior officials, deputy ministers, and bilateral relations with key departments, including CCH, ERDT and LAE. For example, increase Aboriginal workforce and participation in the economy through a renewed focus on Aboriginal Skills Development & Employment. This includes: • Coordinating with OAA/LAE/ERDT departments • Continuing involvement in Shipbuilding Working Group to maximize opportunities • Increasing access to training, skill development and employment

3. Positive and productive relationship through negotiations with Canada and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq					
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year**	**Annual Target 2014-2015**	**Trends, Previous Year Data**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Advance Federal/Provincial/Mi'kmaq work towards a modern treaty through the **Made-in-Nova Scotia Negotiation Process**	All parties remain committed to the 2007 Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia Framework Agreement and to making progress, including interim arrangements on priority negotiation topics, and/or Specific feedback and exceptional items noted	All parties continue to be signed on to the agreement and are meeting monthly. Work plans and progress reports.	Continued tripartite negotiations with the Mi'kmaq and Canada towards a mutually beneficial agreement. Enhanced clarity on Mi'kmaq rights, title and treaty-related issues; improved and stable relations; and reduced social and economic disparity for the Mi'kmaq. Specific feedback and exceptional items noted.	2012/13 – All parties continue to be signed on to the agreement and are meeting monthly. $1 million agreement made with Mi'kmaq Chiefs (KMKNO) over two years to: • provide support for increasing their communication with their communities; and • prepare for potential future agreements for treaty and aboriginal rights and title.	Monthly Main Table meetings with federal and Mi'kmaq negotiation teams. Ongoing work in key Treaty-related areas. Seeking internal input and building consensus on the Draft Wildlife MOU Chapter. Exploration of forestry to build consensus on key issues. Review of Customary Law Pilot Project for Regulatory Offences.

4. Coordinated approach to ensure government meets its legal consultation obligations

Outcome	Measure	Base Year	Annual Target 2014-2015	Trends, Previous Year Data	Strategies to Achieve Target
The provincial government has consistent and effective mechanisms for consulting with the Mi'kmaq and coordinating with the federal government.	Consultation Terms of Reference. Canada-NS MOU on Consultation Cooperation. New consultation policy. Department-specific guidelines for consultation. Departments receive timely and consistent consultation advice. Consultation advisors assist departments in maintaining their consultation records. Legal risk associated with consultation is managed effectively.	Consultation Terms of Reference formally signed in August 2010. Interim consultation policy developed in 2007. Canada-NS MOU on Consultation. Cooperation signed in October 2012.	Implement annual work plan of the Canada-NS MOU on Consultation Cooperation. Complete the new consultation policy. Review the Consultation Terms of Reference	2013/14 - The Mi'kmaq-NS-Canada Consultation Terms of Reference was implemented. It is the first of its kind in Canada and is considered a best practice nationally and internationally.	Project charter will be implemented for the development of the new Consultation Policy. OAA Consultation Division will work closely with departments to develop their consultation guidelines. Develop and implement the 14/15 work plan of the Canada-NS MOU on Consultation Cooperation. Undertake review of Consultation terms of reference with Canada and the Mi'kmaq.
Provincial departments rely on advice from OAA consultations and are effectively supported in their consultations	Relevant departments are consulted effectively. Consultation advisors assist departments in maintaining their consultation records. Legal risks associated	Consultation guidelines drafted by Nova Scotia Environment. 59 active consultations in 2011/12 108 active	Develop/implement operational guidelines for consultation with key departments. Performance indicators will be defined and	2013/14 – OAA advised NS departments on more than 120 consultations with the Mi'kmaq of NS using guidelines. Implemented $2 million funding agreement with Mi'kmaq Chiefs and the	Key departments are assigned a consultation advisor. Consultation advisors utilize common tools when advising departments. Consultation advisors maintain complete consultation records. Provide capacity funding and support to the Mi'kmaq to participate in consultation.

with the Mi'kmaq	with consultation are managed effectively.	consultations in 2012/13. 120+ active consultations in 2013/14	used to develop an annual performance report. The provincial government meets it legal obligations to consult.	Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiations Office to help them further develop their capacity to negotiate and participate in consultations with the Province.	

5. Enhanced public awareness and appreciation of Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal history and culture					
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year**	**Annual Target 2014-2015**	**Trends, Previous Year Data**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Greater awareness of the Mi'kmaq culture and history provides a foundation for positive relations and support.	Number of events with an education or public awareness purpose This measures activity level not progress toward an outcome	2014	TBD	2013/14 – Mi'kmaq History Month (MHM) Committee established 2013/14 – MHM website developed	Promote public awareness of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia through **Treaty Day and Mi'kmaq History Month** and other cultural and heritage expression opportunities. CCH/OAA and Tripartite Forum Project Fund collaborating to extend Mi'kmaq History Month and build community capacity and event planning infrastructure for future years. October 2014 marks the 21st anniversary of the proclamation of Mi'kmaq History Month. OAA is an active champion/participant in Treaty Day, Mi'kmaq History Month and National Aboriginal Day. This year, a significant event is the APTN Aboriginal Day Live simulcast concert and celebration, to be hosted in Halifax and Winnipeg. The Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) has recognized the importance of having a wide range of Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal resources available to support student learning in Nova Scotia.